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FM AMEMBASSY KUWAIT  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2167  
INFO RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUWAIT 005137

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STATE FOR NEA/ARPI, LONDON FOR TSOU, PARIS FOR ZEYA

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/13/2015  
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [ECON](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: SHI'A CLERIC FINDS NO LOVE FOR PRESIDENT  
AHMADINEJAD ON RECENT TRIP TO IRAN

Classified By: Ambassador Richard LeBaron for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) In a December 8 meeting, Kuwaiti Shi'a cleric Sayed Mohammed Baqer Al-Mohri told Emboffs he met "no one who was happy" with President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's government during his early-December trip to Iran. Al-Mohri said he met with the head of the Higher Judiciary Council, a former Minister of Interior, several Shi'a clerics in Tehran and Qom, two Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials, and Kuwaiti Ambassador to Iran Majdi Al-Thufiri, all of whom expressed "disappointment" with Ahmadinejad. Al-Mohri claimed this sentiment was shared by many Iranians and predicted mounting opposition within the government to Ahmadinejad would lead to his replacement "within six months" by a "moderate."

¶2. (C) Al-Mohri said he dismissed others' suggestion that he meet with Ahmadinejad while in Iran, saying the President was provincial and unsophisticated, ill-suited to the demands of statesmanship. Al-Mohri said rising inflation contributed to the country's worsening economy and undermined public support for the President. He also claimed Iranians "disagreed" with Ahmadinejad's controversial statements on Israel, though he said they supported Iran's "peaceful" nuclear program as a national right. According to Al-Mohri, Iran is "as influential" in Iraq as the U.S., though he suggested Iran's intentions were benign. Repeating advice he has given in previous meetings, Al-Mohri encouraged greater USG dialogue with the Iranian government.

Bio Note:

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¶3. (C) Al-Mohri is Secretary General of the Shi'a Clerics Gathering, a conservative Shi'a political association, and the self-appointed representative of Grand Ayatollah Ali Al-Sistani in Kuwait. He claims to have close connections to many of Iran's top government officials, including former presidents Sayed Mohammed Khatami and Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani. Al-Mohri appears to be in his mid-sixties. He speaks Arabic and Farsi fluently.

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LEBARON